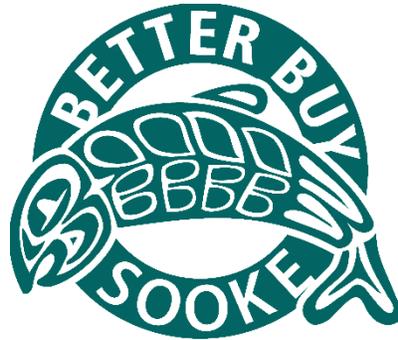




Sooke Region
Chamber of Commerce
www.SookeRegionChamber.com

Shopping In Sooke 2025

Survey Results



Presented by

The Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce

May, 2025



Introduction 2025

Sooke, a vibrant coastal community on southern Vancouver Island, is known for its natural beauty, welcoming spirit, and small-town charm. In early 2025, the Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce conducted a community-wide survey to better understand where and how residents are spending their money—and what factors influence their decisions to shop locally or elsewhere. The survey aimed to uncover not only economic patterns but also community priorities that could guide future planning, business development, and advocacy efforts.

While the community continues to value Sooke’s proximity to nature, trails, arts, and the friendly feel of a small town, the focus is towards local economic activity—specifically where people are shopping, dining, and accessing services, and why they sometimes choose to spend their dollars outside of Sooke.

With rising interest in strengthening local economies and building community resilience, this initiative set out to identify both the strengths and gaps in Sooke’s retail and service landscape. The survey collected insights from over 280 residents, covering their most recent purchases outside of Sooke, their intentions and satisfaction with local shopping, and broader lifestyle trends such as commuting, work locations, and visitor habits.

Conducted online, the survey captured data to support local business growth, infrastructure planning, and community development initiatives.

The results are intended not only to guide business owners and entrepreneurs but also to inform local government and stakeholders as they make decisions about economic development, transportation, and quality of life in the region.

This report summarizes the key findings and translates them into actionable recommendations for local government, business owners, and community stakeholders. By understanding where dollars are flowing—and why—we can work together to close the gap between community intention and economic reality, ensuring Sooke continues to thrive as a place to live, work, and shop.

Highlights:

The top things that people love most about Sooke are its proximity to the ocean & the small-town feel

The survey was undertaken by the Sooke Region Chamber of Commerce to collect consumer data from the people of Sooke, inform politicians of the changing economic development landscape in Sooke, identify future business prospects for budding entrepreneurs, and provide insights for local businesses on what their customers are thinking.

Contents

Introduction 2025 2

Executive Summary 2025 4

What statement best describes you? (Where you live, work and play) 5

What do you most love about Sooke? 6

How much money do you spend locally and where do you spend it? 9

Where do you get your shopping information? 11

How many Sooke businesses might you know of? 11

Would you like to spend more at Sooke businesses? 13

What were your last three (3) purchases or transactions in Sooke? 14

What were your last three (3) purchases or transactions outside of Sooke? 15

Comparing in-Sooke to beyond-Sooke purchasing behaviour 16

What is missing in Sooke, that you would support? 17

Additional Feedback – Key Community Feedback on Sooke’s Economy 18

Individual Comments Regarding Sooke Economy 20

Executive Summary 2025

The 2025 Sooke Local Spending Survey reveals a strong community interest in supporting local businesses but also highlights persistent gaps in where money is actually being spent.

A significant **73.3% of respondents** expressed a desire to spend more of their money at Sooke businesses. Only **25.2%** felt satisfied with their current level of local spending, and a mere **0.14%** were unsure. This indicates a strong underlying intent to support the local economy.

Based on reported purchases, **groceries, gas, and pharmacy items** were the most common local transactions. **Groceries alone** far exceeded other categories, demonstrating strong local options for essential needs. Restaurants, home goods, personal services (like haircuts), and liquor sales also showed solid local activity.

Conversely, respondents reported purchasing **clothing, household items, restaurant meals, and some groceries** most frequently **outside** of Sooke. Notably, **clothing and dining** saw significant out-of-town. This data reveals a compelling opportunity for Sooke businesses and policymakers. While residents are eager to support local enterprises, the availability, variety, or pricing of certain products and services may be driving them elsewhere. By addressing these gaps, especially in sectors like clothing, dining, and household.

Planning efforts should focus on **long-term development, zoning, and support for local businesses**, with tourism as a secondary consideration.

Overall, the survey results suggest that Sooke residents value the town's natural beauty and community feel, but they also recognize the need for infrastructure improvements and economic growth. To capitalize on the town's potential as a tourist destination, it may be necessary for Sooke to prioritize town beautification projects while also finding ways to support local businesses and attract new industries to the area.

Highlights:

- Proximity to the ocean, small-town feel, and people are the top things people love most about Sooke.
- Desire to shop local
- Grocery purchases both in and out of Sooke
- Clothing and Dining Significant out-of-town spending
- Word of mouth and Social Media are the most frequently used sources of information in the community.
- Sooke's primary audience is its residents.
- Sooke has the potential to become a tourist destination, but town beautification is critical for this to happen.

What statement best describes you? (Where you live, work and play)

A recent community input poll reveals a clear picture of Sooke's core participants: an overwhelming majority—**over 280 respondents**—indicate they **live in Sooke and spend most of their days here**. This confirms that the heart of our community is rooted in those who not only call Sooke home but also actively participate in local life daily. This reflects a **strongly rooted community** and supports the case for investing in local infrastructure, recreation, traffic improvements, and services that enhance day-to-day life for residents.

Smaller segments represent commuters, occasional visitors, and those with other types of engagement. Notably: A modest number **commute outside Sooke for work** or work here but live elsewhere suggesting the need for improved **commuter routes** and traffic flow planning. Advocacy for public transport or carpooling support.

Only 2.3% work in Sooke but live elsewhere.

This may suggest barriers for out-of-town workers or underutilized potential for attracting external talent or businesses.

A small but meaningful portion **visit Sooke occasionally**, highlighting Sooke's broader regional reach.

These insights reinforce the importance of focusing our programs, events, and advocacy on the residents who live and work in Sooke. They are the foundation of our economic vibrancy.

Key Findings:

78% of respondents live in Sooke and spend the majority of their time here.

This confirms that the bulk of community engagement and economic activity is driven by full-time residents. Reinforces the need to invest in infrastructure, services, and business development that support day-to-day life in Sooke.

Based on survey responses, 8% of participants indicated they live in Sooke but commute outside the community for work. This number is likely an underestimation, as the sample of 280 respondents may not fully represent the broader population. This group would benefit from improved traffic flow, road infrastructure, and potential carpool or transit initiatives.

Only 2% work in Sooke but live elsewhere.

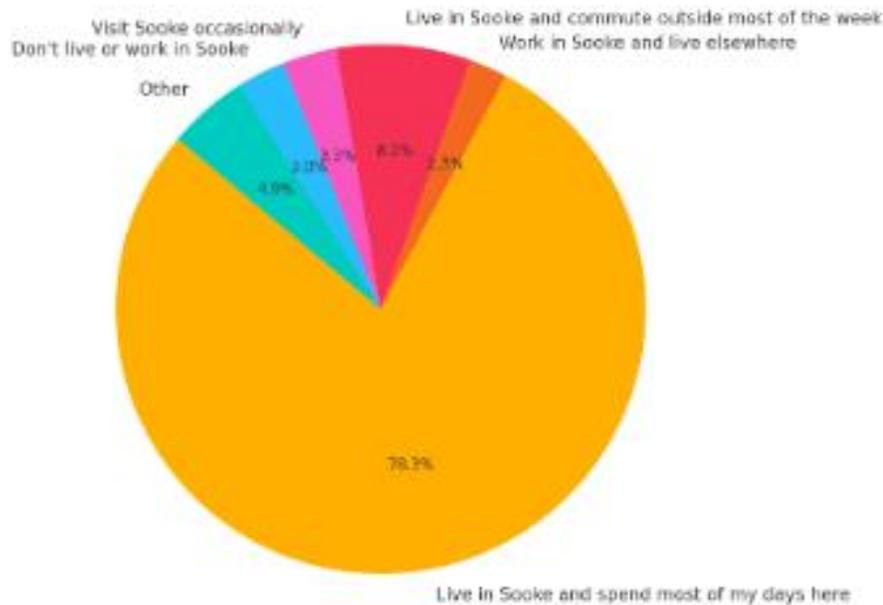
Indicates potential barriers to attracting workers from outside the region, such as housing availability or transit access.

Peripheral Engagement

12% of respondents are occasional visitors, non-residents, or fall under "Other."

While there is some external interest in Sooke, the primary audience remains the local population.

Community Engagement with Sooke



What do you most love about Sooke?

A recent data visualization, compiled from community input, reveals key insights into what residents most identify with and value about the Sooke region. The following analysis highlights the top themes and attributes that contribute to the area's sense of place and community identity.

Proximity to the Ocean -This was the most frequently selected feature, demonstrating the ocean's central role in both lifestyle and community pride. Access to marine activities, views, and coastal living is a defining asset for residents. **Small-Town** - The strong response for Sooke's intimate, small-town atmosphere underscores the importance of preserving its welcoming, close-knit charm amidst growth and development. **Parks and Trails (including The Potholes)** Sooke's natural recreational spaces are deeply valued, particularly for hiking, swimming, and enjoying the outdoors with family and friends.

The People -Responses indicated a meaningful appreciation for the community spirit, friendliness, and support found among residents. Old Growth Forests, Access to surrounding forests reflects Sooke's identity as a place where nature is revered and integrated into daily life. Remoteness - A notable number of respondents value Sooke's distance from urban centres, pointing to a desire for intentional living away from the bustle of city life.

Artisan Shops & Essential Services -While not as dominant, access to unique local businesses and

essential services remains important to many. Outdoor Sports and Adventure - Activities like fishing, kayaking, and cycling hold appeal, but appear to serve niche interest groups rather than widespread identity markers.

Lower-Priority Features -Live Music, Live Theatre, and Fine Arts Events -Cultural programming received the fewest selections, suggesting either lower community engagement with these offerings or a gap in availability or promotion.

Implications for Planning and Community Development -As the District continues shaping its vision and policy, these findings support prioritizing:

- *Coastal access and marine protection
- *Preservation of parks, forests, and trail systems
- *Growth strategies that maintain Sooke's small-town feel
- *Community-led initiatives and opportunities to deepen social connection

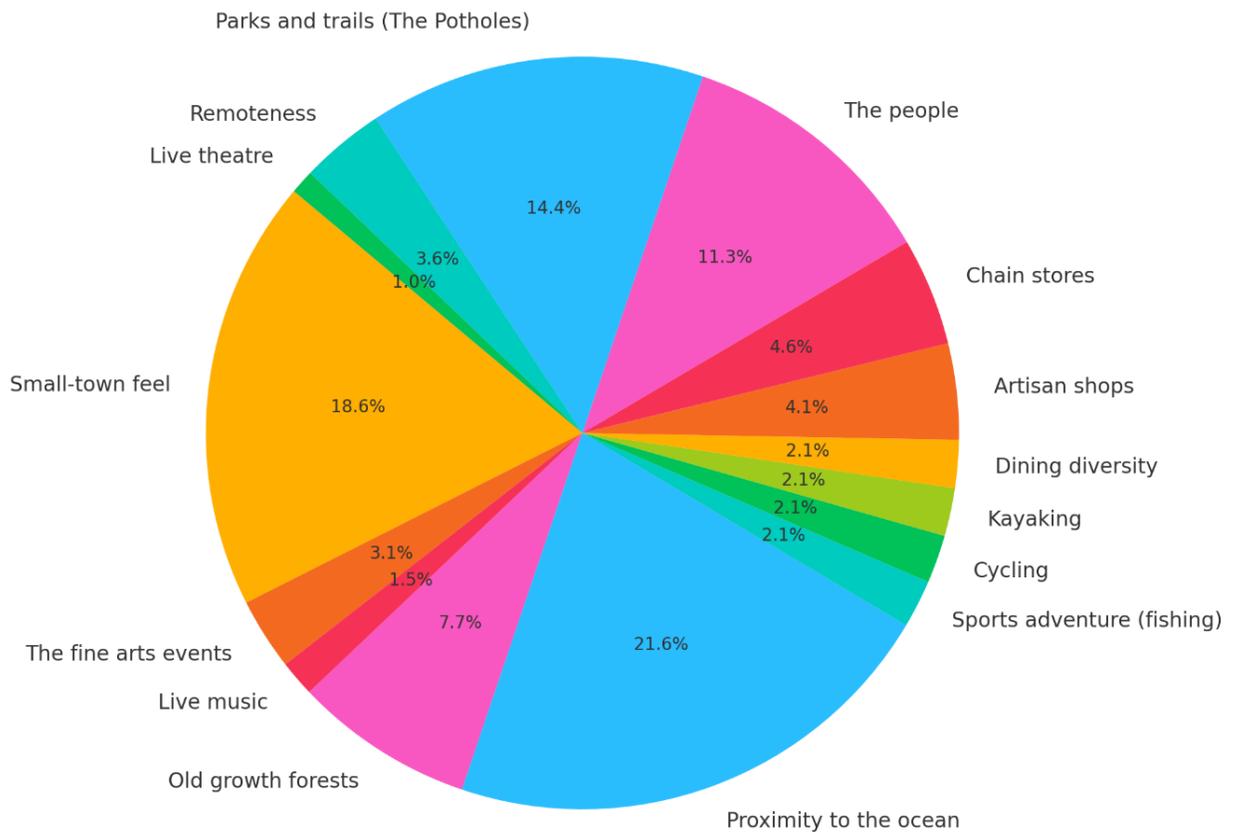
These insights also highlight potential growth areas, such as enhancing access to cultural events or diversifying recreational programming. The Chamber of Commerce is pleased to support the District in aligning economic development with what residents most value about living here.



Highlights:

The community heavily identifies with **natural surroundings**—particularly the **ocean, forests, and parks/trails**—and the **small-town, connected atmosphere**. Social elements like **the people** also score high, while more structured cultural events (like **live theatre** and **live music**) are less impactful for most. Economic or lifestyle conveniences (e.g., **chain stores, artisan shops**) sit in the middle, suggesting they are appreciated but not central to identity.

Community Values - Response Distribution



How much money do you spend locally and where do you spend it?

The chart titled "Business Category Spent Money" presents aggregated data reflecting how residents and consumers in Sooke allocate their spending across different local business categories. Key findings from the data are as follows:

Top Spending Categories: Retail and Food Services 40% - **Cafés and Bakeries** lead all categories with approximately 250 counts, indicating very high local patronage. Groceries, Pharmacies, Restaurants, and Hardware stores are also in this list of top spending categories.

Insight – Residents are highly supportive of food-related businesses and home improvement/maintenance suppliers.

Health Services Approx 28% - Chiropractic, massage, physiotherapy, manicures/pedicures recorded spending levels in the 205–215 range, showing strong community reliance on wellness, food services, and essential goods.

Insight: Strong local demand exists for personal care and medical services.

Moderate Spending Categories: Trades & Services Approx 20%

Transportation, Insurance and Banking, Brewery, Distillery, and Liquor Stores saw notable activity, each ranging from 145–175 counts, suggesting they remain important but slightly less prioritized than the top tier.

Insight: Spending is significant in local trades and practical support services, suggesting opportunities for business development.

Gifts, Local Recreation, Homecare Items, and Online Local Sellers fell into the mid-range, between 120–140 counts. Approx 10%

Insight: While a smaller share, there's meaningful spending in creative and experience-based businesses.

Lower Spending Categories:

Sectors such as **Veterinarian Services (~40), Clothing (~45), Crafts (~48), and Event Services (~50)** recorded the lowest engagement. This may point to either a lower frequency of purchases or a trend of residents sourcing these services outside the community.

Tech Products, Office Supplies, and Local Trades (e.g. contractors) also fell in the lower to mid-range, potentially highlighting areas for business development or promotional opportunity.

Interpretation: The high levels of spending in food service (cafés, restaurants), health and wellness, and hardware/home care suggest these are critical pillars of Sooke's local economy. Meanwhile, the lower levels of spending in apparel, crafts, pet services, and technology indicate potential gaps in availability, visibility, or consumer preference that could be addressed through strategic support or promotion.

This data provides useful insight for both the District and the Sooke Chamber in identifying high-

impact sectors to support and underrepresented areas that may benefit from business development, marketing initiatives, or local procurement encouragement.

AVERAGE MONEY SPENT

LESS THAN \$50 A WEEK	32
\$51 -100 A WEEK	194
\$301 – 1000 A WEEK	53
OVER \$1000 A WEEK	3

Top Spending Retail and Food Services – Cafes and Bakeries #1



Where do you get your shopping information?

The chart provides insight into how Sooke residents discover shopping opportunities in the area. The top three sources are **personal experience** (185 responses), **word of mouth** from friends or family (183), and **chance exposure** while walking or driving (179). These findings underscore the critical role of real-world presence and local visibility in influencing consumer behaviour.

Social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, each received 159 responses, making them collectively significant as digital word-of-mouth channels. This suggests that while face-to-face interactions remain dominant, online engagement, particularly via social platforms, also plays a key role in shaping local shopping habits.

Conversely, **traditional advertising mediums** like newspapers (85 responses) and magazines (85), as well as **individual business websites** and **online directories** (both at 90), were the least used but still important information sources for getting information.

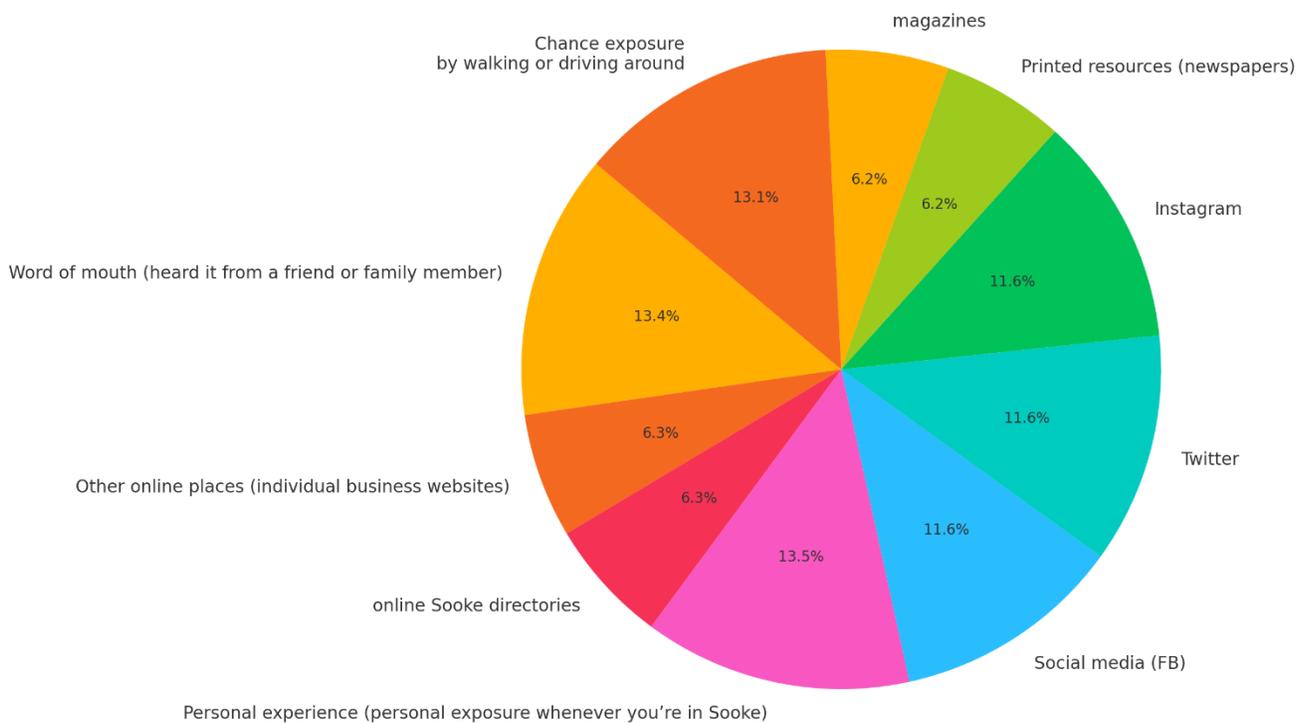
Overall, the data highlights the importance of maintaining an active and visible presence in the community, both in person and online, to effectively reach local consumers.

HIGHLIGHTS

WORD OF MOUTH RANKS TOPS FOR SHOPPING INFORMATION

NETWORKING IS KEY FOR BUSINESSES!

How Sooke Residents Get Information About Shopping



How many Sooke businesses might you know of?

The largest group (85 respondents) knows **up to 40 businesses**, suggesting that most people are only familiar with a limited number of local establishments.

A smaller group (21 respondents) reported knowing **up to 600 businesses**, which appears to be an outlier and likely includes those with extensive community or business involvement.

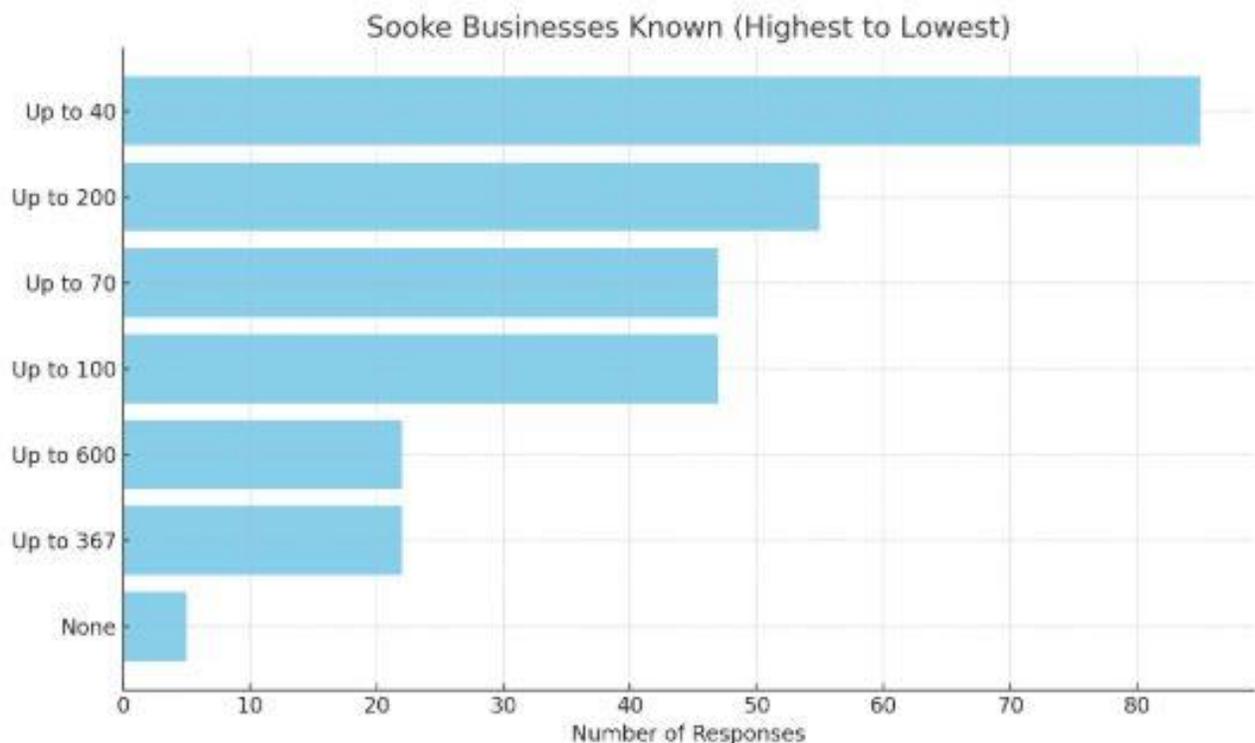
Mid-range familiarity (up to 70, 100, and 200 businesses) was selected by 45–53 respondents, indicating a moderate level of business awareness among a significant portion of the population.

Very few respondents (3) reported knowing **no businesses** at all.

This distribution highlights the importance of increasing visibility and awareness of local businesses, especially among the majority who are only familiar with a limited subset. The data shows a clear opportunity to raise awareness about the broader business community in Sooke

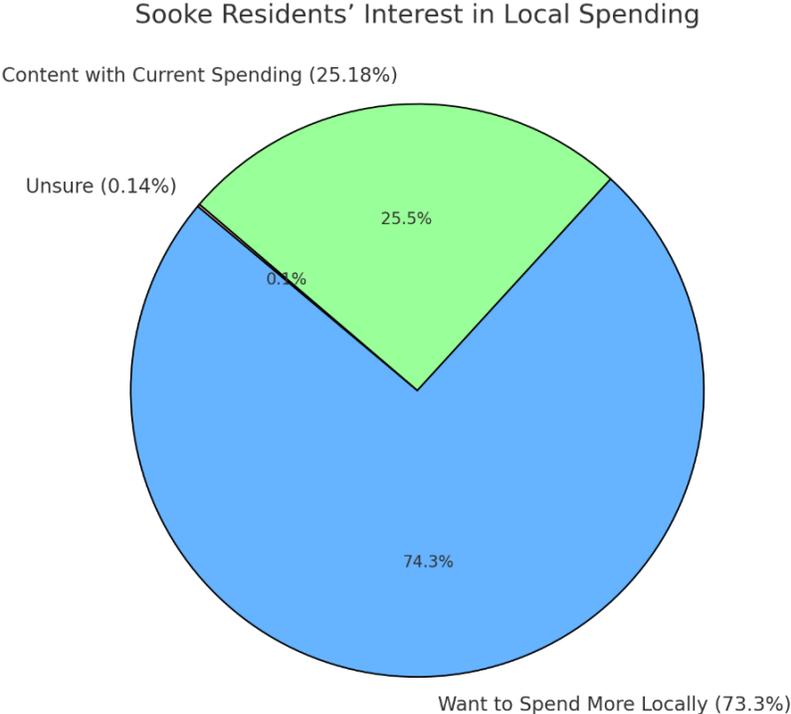
Highlights:

- The majority of the respondents have limited knowledge of Sooke's businesses, with most respondents knowing less than 100 businesses
- Many residents may primarily frequent a smaller subset of local establishments.
- While Sooke has a sizable number of registered businesses, the data suggests that many residents are focused on a smaller subset of these establishments with visibility.



Would you like to spend more at Sooke businesses?

A significant 74.3% of respondents indicated that they would like to increase the amount they spend at Sooke businesses, **highlighting a strong local appetite for supporting the community economy.** Meanwhile, just over a quarter (25.18%) felt they already spent enough locally, and only a negligible 0.14% were undecided. This reflects a clear enthusiasm for shopping local, likely driven by values such as supporting small businesses, building community resilience, and encouraging local economic growth. Still, enthusiasm doesn't always equate to follow-through. Whether this interest can be turned into tangible action may depend on factors like affordability, product availability, and convenience. For local businesses and decision-makers, these findings suggest a valuable opportunity to bridge the gap between intent and action by removing barriers and making local spending more accessible.



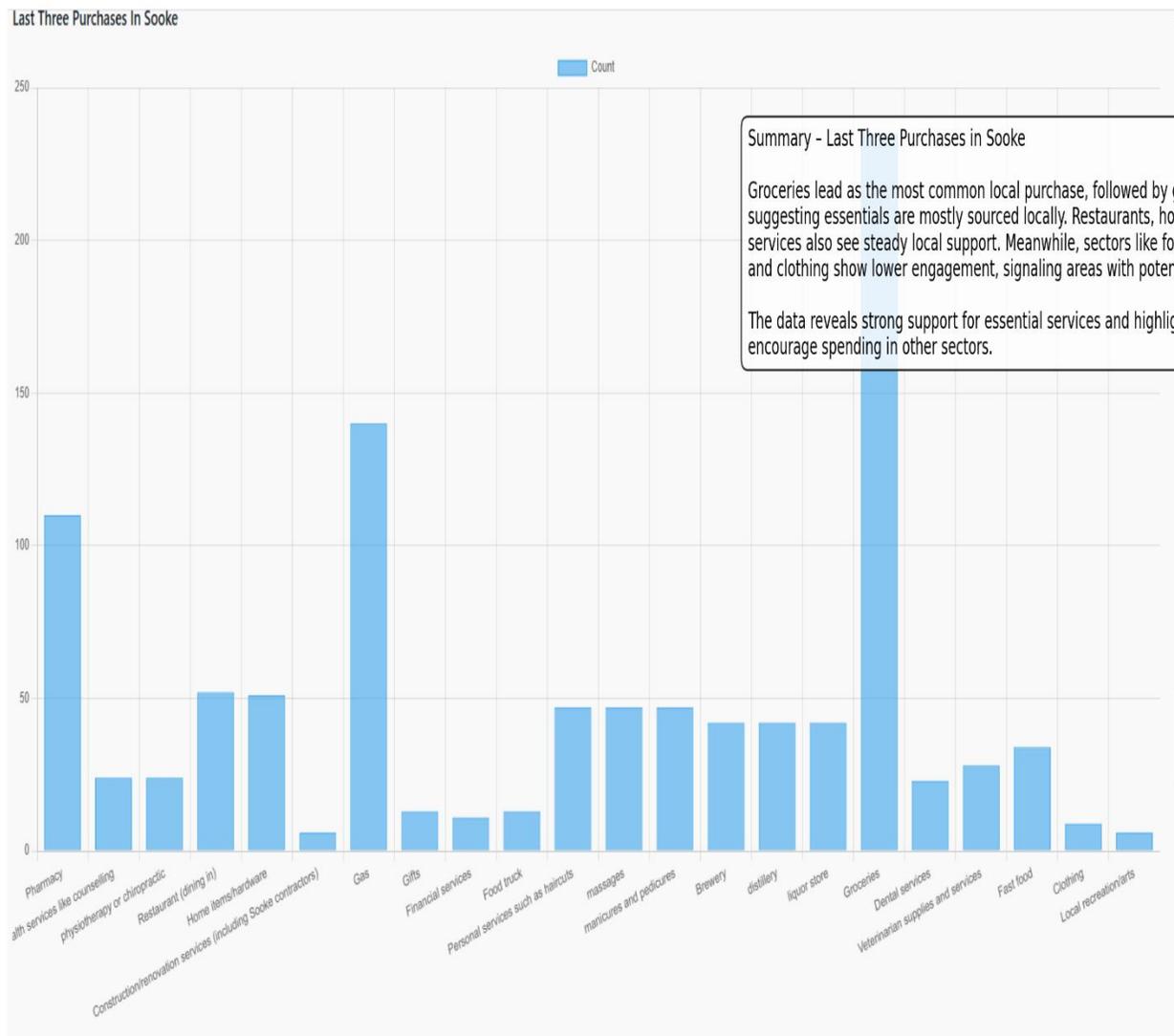
- Highlights:
- The vast majority (74.3%) of respondents expressed an interest in spending more money locally at Sooke businesses, indicating a strong desire to support the local economy.
 - A small percentage (25%) of respondents are content with their current level of local spending, and an even smaller group (0.14%) is unsure.
 - While the reasons for this desire could be numerous, it's unclear whether these respondents can increase their spending at Sooke businesses or face barriers in doing so. Nonetheless, this data can provide useful insights for local businesses and policymakers looking to promote economic development in Sooke.

What were your last three (3) purchases or transactions in Sooke?

This graph highlights the most recent spending habits of Sooke residents, revealing where they're currently supporting local businesses. Unsurprisingly, **groceries** dominate the chart as the top category, followed by **gas** and **pharmacy** purchases, suggesting that essential needs are most often met locally. Moderate spending was seen in sectors such as **restaurants, home items, and personal services** (like haircuts, massages, and spa treatments), indicating a healthy local demand for everyday goods and services.

**ESSENTIAL NEEDS
ARE NUMBER 1**

Categories with relatively lower counts include **local recreation/arts, financial services, food trucks, and clothing**, pointing to potential opportunities for business growth or areas where local offerings may not yet be meeting consumer demand. **The data suggests that while essentials are mostly sourced in town, there's room to expand and promote other sectors to encourage a broader base of local shopping.**

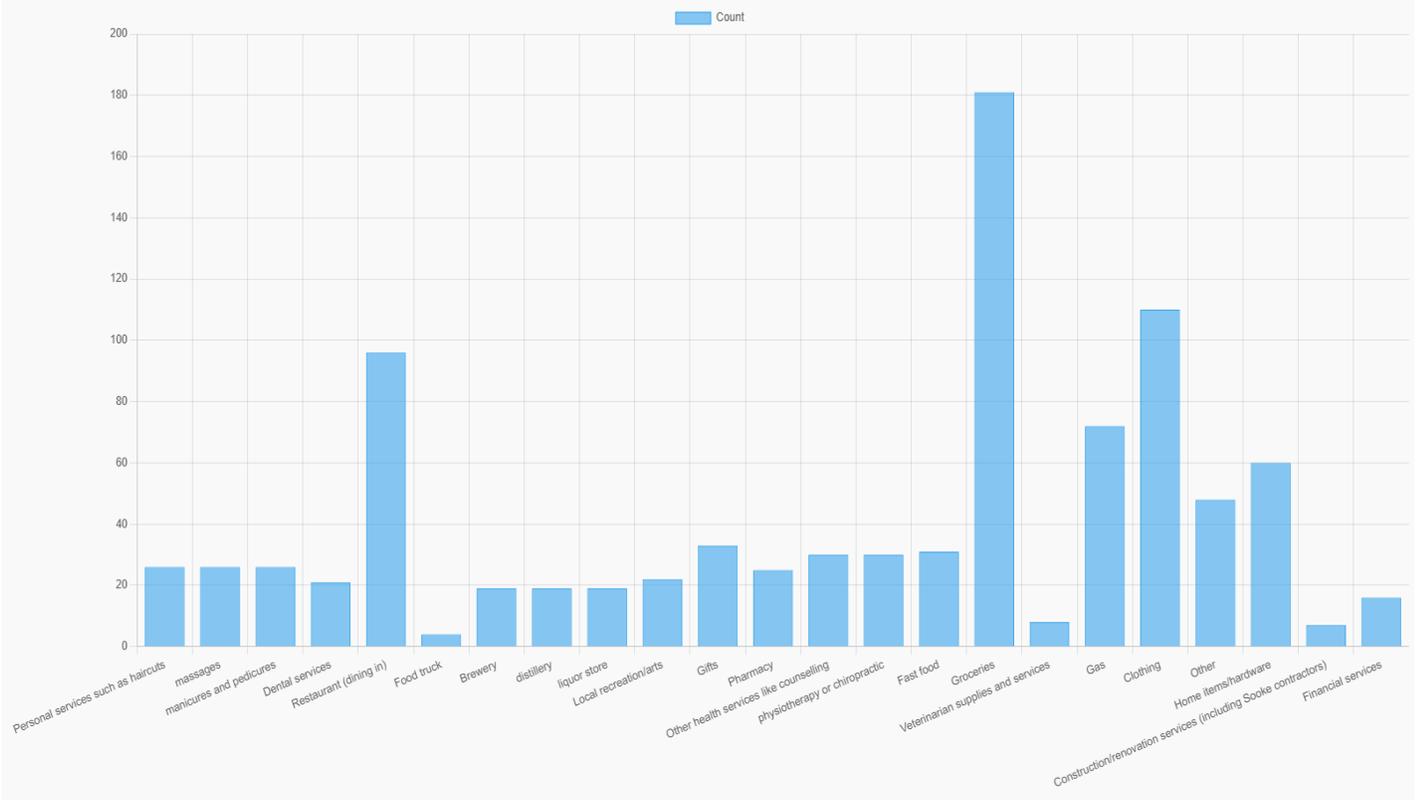


What were your last three (3) purchases or transactions outside of Sooke?

When asked about their last three purchases made outside of Sooke, residents most frequently cited **groceries, clothing, and veterinarian services**. Notably, groceries accounted for the highest number of responses, indicating that many households still shop for essentials outside the community. Dining out (restaurants), fast food, and home items/hardware also appeared prominently, suggesting ongoing leakage in several retail and service categories. While some services—like personal care, dental, and pharmacy—were also sought outside Sooke, **the contrast with the "Purchases in Sooke" graph shows clear opportunities for business growth or expansion within Sooke. This data reinforces the importance of increasing local options and convenience to retain spending in the region.**

GROCERY PURCHASES POPULAR IN AND OUTSIDE OF SOOKE!

Last Three Purchases Outside Sooke



Summary: When asked about their last three purchases made *outside* of Sooke, residents most frequently cited groceries, clothing, and veterinarian services. Groceries accounted for the highest number of responses, indicating that many households still shop for essentials outside the community. Dining out (restaurants), fast food, and home items/hardware also appeared prominently, suggesting ongoing leakage in several retail and service categories. While some services—like personal care, dental, and pharmacy—were also sought outside Sooke, the contrast with the 'Purchases in Sooke' graph shows clear opportunities for business growth or expansion within Sooke. This data reinforces the importance of increasing local options and convenience to retain spending in the region.

Comparing in-Sooke to beyond-Sooke purchasing behaviour

Based on the data provided in the table, we can see that the highest number of purchases were made for groceries, with a total of 416 purchases (235 in Sooke and 181 outside of Sooke). Gas was the second highest purchase category with a total of 212 purchases (140 in Sooke and 72 outside of Sooke). The third highest was Health Services with a total of 155 responses. (95 in Sooke and 60 out of Sooke)

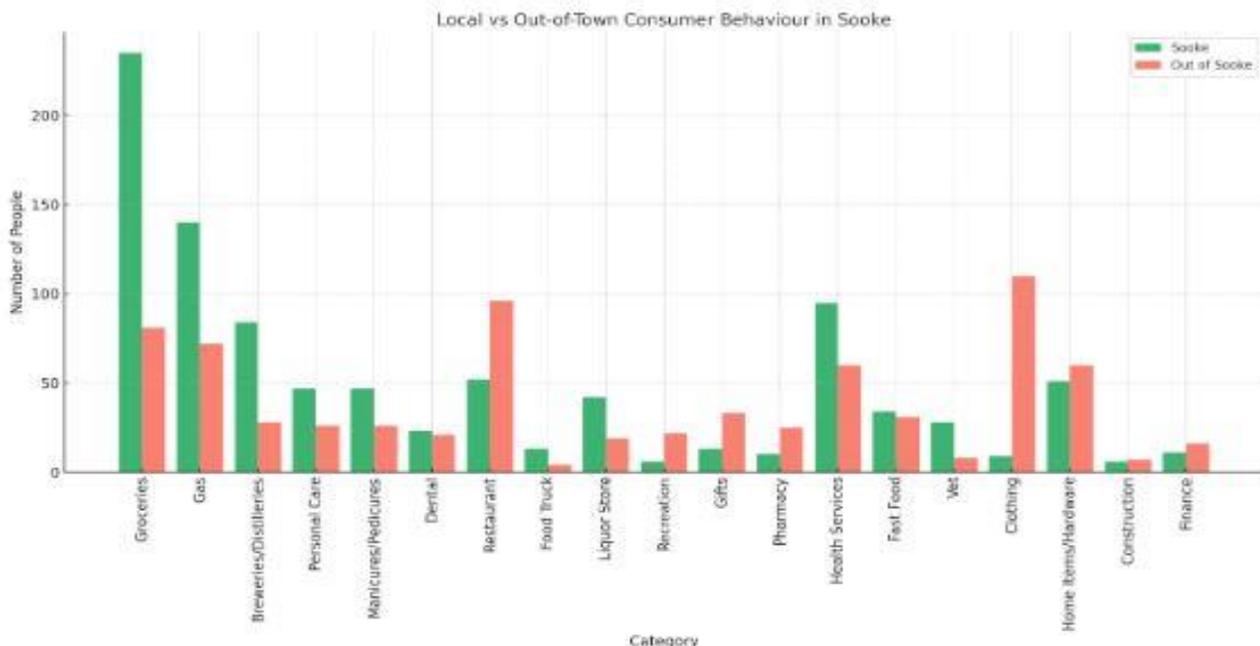
Highlights:

Groceries and gas were the top two purchase categories, with the highest number of purchases made both in and outside of Sooke.

Interestingly, we can see that some categories had more purchases outside of Sooke than in Sooke, such as clothing, home items, restaurants, and recreation. This could suggest that people in Sooke may not have as many options for these services or may prefer to travel outside of the area for them.

On the other hand, categories such as breweries/distilleries, dental services, and veterinary services had significantly more purchases in Sooke than outside of Sooke, which could suggest that these services are more easily accessible or preferred in the local area.

This data highlights both the strengths and gaps in Sooke’s retail and service landscape. While residents show a strong inclination to support local businesses when they can, targeted support and business development in underrepresented sectors—particularly clothing, recreation, dining, and home



items—could help keep more dollars circulating within the community. These insights should help guide strategic planning, economic development efforts, and support for new or expanding businesses in Sooke.

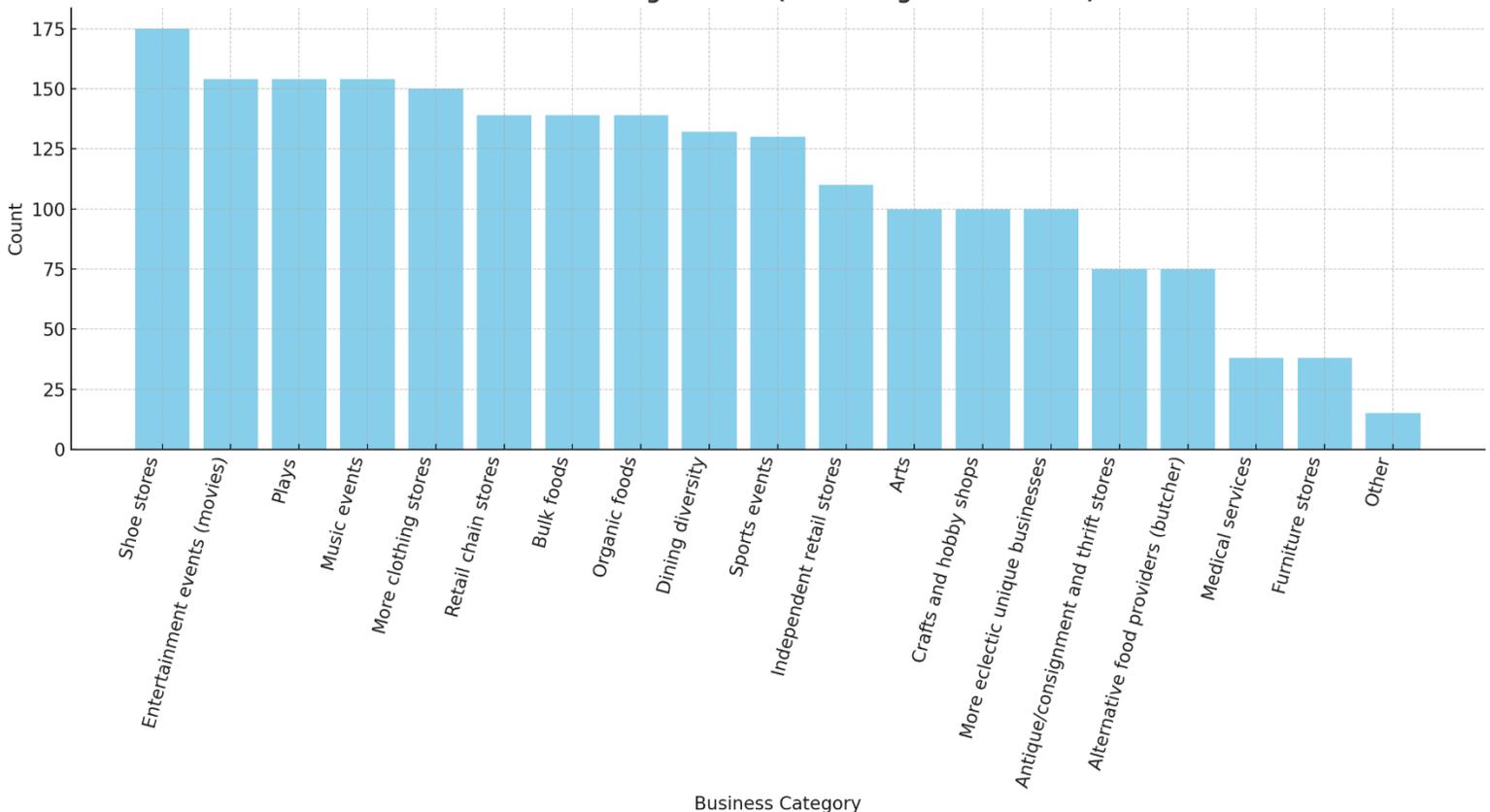
What is missing in Sooke, that you would support?

As part of the 2025 Sooke Local Spending Survey, residents were asked to identify the types of businesses they feel are currently missing or underrepresented in the community. The question in full was: “What types of businesses/services are missing in Sooke, that you would frequently support if they were here? Choose all that you would financially support.” **Shoe stores** received the highest level of response, indicating a strong demand. **More clothing stores, entertainment venues** (such as movie theatres), **live music and plays**, and **retail chain stores** all ranked high, reflecting a desire for expanded shopping and entertainment options. **Dining diversity** and **alternative food providers** (e.g., butchers, bulk and organic foods) also featured prominently, pointing to unmet needs in local food services. Other notable gaps include **medical services, sports events, arts and crafts shops**, and **furniture stores**. This data underscores a consumer interest in diversifying retail and entertainment offerings and a potential opportunity for business attraction and development initiatives. The Chamber encourages the District to consider these findings as part of future economic planning, zoning, and investment attraction strategies to support a more vibrant and self-sufficient local economy.

Highlights:

- **More shopping variety:** Respondents also expressed a desire for more shopping options
- **More dining options:** A significant number of respondents expressed a desire for more dining options in Sooke,
- **Medical services, community and the arts** were also mentioned
- **Lower prices:** Many respondents mentioned that they would financially support businesses that offer lower prices, indicating that affordability is a significant factor in their spending decisions.

Business Missing in Sooke (Sorted Highest to Lowest)



Additional Feedback – Key Community Feedback on Sooke’s Economy

1. Infrastructure & Accessibility

Roads & Traffic: Overwhelming concern about traffic congestion, lack of alternate routes, and dangerous pedestrian conditions (especially West Coast Rd, Grant Rd, and near roundabouts).
Sidewalks & Lighting: Strong demand for more sidewalks, crosswalk signals, and safe pedestrian routes – particularly for mobility-challenged individuals.
Public Transit: Inadequate public transportation is a barrier to shopping and working locally.

2. Commercial & Retail Gaps

Limited Shopping Options: Many residents feel Sooke lacks retail diversity, driving them to Langford or Victoria. Calls for hardware, craft supplies, affordable groceries, fresh fish, and clothing.
Restaurant Scene: Desire for more unique dining experiences, live music venues, and extended hours of operation.
Rental & Commercial Space: Multiple comments stressed the need for more commercial rental space to support existing and new businesses, as well as the need to ease rezoning processes.

3. Cost of Living & Affordability

High Prices: Groceries and rent are frequently cited as unaffordable, especially compared to Langford.
Low-Income Struggles: Residents living paycheck-to-paycheck feel excluded from supporting local businesses.

4. Economic Development Opportunities

Support for Local Business: Residents are eager to shop local but need more visibility, coordination, and affordability.
Promotion & Events: Suggestions include theme days, sidewalk sales, and marketing support through business associations and coordinated advertising.
Entrepreneurship Support: Requests for Chamber-led guidance on how to start and operate a business in Sooke, including costs and permits.

5. Tourism & Downtown Revitalization

Waterfront Development: Residents see untapped potential in the waterfront area for tourism and economic activity.
Arts & Culture: Ideas like an arts-based façade competition, unique restaurant design, and public events are seen as ways to attract visitors and boost community pride.

6. Social & Community Services

Health Services: Need for expanded local medical services (e.g. x-rays, specialists, urgent care).
Youth Services: Many comments call for a teen hangout spot, arcade, or nighttime entertainment options.
Educational & Cultural Programming: Support for workshops, community education, and arts events.

7. Local Identity & Values

Preserve Small-Town Character: Residents want growth managed carefully to retain Sooke's unique charm – with some calling for halts or limits to further development.

Sense of Community: Numerous mentions of the friendliness of locals and pride in the businesses that have endured challenges like COVID.

8. Other Notable Mentions

Cannabis Industry: Commenters noted its omission in economic discussions despite being a visible sector.

Environmental Design: Concern about drive-through development leading to car dependency and loss of pedestrian friendliness.

A strong sense of community is felt by all! It's the people!



Individual Comments Regarding Sooke Economy

I'm new here and it's a beautiful town, the people are friendly, and most people in the stores will tell you other places to shop locally to meet your needs

More commercial space is urgently needed for both businesses and the tax base.

Making rezoning in the core easier would be nice to attract commercial developers.

Sooke could use a much more robust medical treatment options, X-rays, ultrasound, medical specialties etc.

In your choices of where money is spent locally, coffee shops were not included. They don't fit into fast food or restaurant dine in so maybe a category for that. Thinking more about gourmet coffee take out- Artisan's Garden, Cafe Vosino, Little Vienna, Island Tart.

Possibly some kind of connection between businesses...coordinated sales or sidewalk events. Theme days. A reason to shop.

Sooke needs more rental spaces for current and future business. there is a limited rental market and it's more expensive than Downtown Victoria.

The roads need to be improved for people to want to come out that way. The traffic and road rage make it so that I'll drive to Langford before going to Sooke . I live in East Sooke so the distance is the same for either location. I'd rather support the smaller community.

Sometimes the challenge of shopping in Sooke relates to knowing hours of operation and the consistency of those.

I think the biggest barrier for me is public transportation.

The design of commercial property for drive-through services is a pedestrian-unfriendly design that leads toward driving having to be favoured...this is most unfortunate.

Shop local

The only thing missing for me here is pubs with a live band, not just local or small, but a venue that can host a good size

I would also like to see more promotion of our small independent business. Keeping profits in the community/Canada is important to me and helps Sooke flourish.

We could use more events for our downtown, bring in more tourism. We are working on that. more businesses mean more people staying in Sooke, so they will shop in Sooke.

I would love to see an arts competition for designing unique facades or special ways to enhance people wanting to use our restaurants and of course having the actual restaurants really upgrade their menus with really unique delicious food. People driving into Sooke look for places to eat and if we had unique looking restaurants (along with scrumptious food) they will stop and explore and support the area.

Sooke is know for its massive Fine Art Show. Lets show Visitors what local artists can come up with to help Showcase Sooke on the Tourism radar to visit.

We really need more sidewalks and street lights as motorists do no slow down or give you room to walk and it is dangerous example: Grant Rd

Prices are Too High, produce quality is lousy. Traffic congestion makes it very difficult to get around. Forces me to choose Langford and Colwood

Glad to see this proactive survey :)

Sooke businesses have excellent, helpful and friendly staff.

The charm of Sooke is no box stores, no chains. However in todays society of name brands that can be hard.

A business association that works together to promote more collective events that are well planned and well advertised to the greater community through the existing channels of the newspaper and recognized social media channels on a

consistent basis might be useful. Consistent information resources are more valuable than hit and miss.

We need an arcade or somewhere for teens to go other than McDonald's. More restaurants and more shopping so we don't have to go to Langford/Victoria as much.

I enjoy shopping in Sooke but would definitely shop more if it was more walkable and there was more bus service as I don't drive.

Infrastructure is Sooke's main concern

Poor economy because there isn't much to come to Sooke for except to get to a trail or beach. Sooke's inner road infrastructure is hideous, the one road in and out of Sooke is very inadequate for a community that is growing at an alarming rate. Hard to get people here other than big conglomerate developers. Sooke is not a 'shopping' community unless it's the arts.

Have been here nearly 20 years and watched this town explode with housing all over the area. However the basic same stores remain, there's been NO increase in shopping incentives, no increase in waterfront development including shops and walks, no changes other than huge traffic issues with no plans for an alternate route that doesn't take 3 hours and bring you onto the highway far from Langford or Victoria areas.

There are no changes to recreation facilities, no changes to anything but the number of home you can cram into a space in a given time. People spend their time elsewhere because Sooke doesn't offer it here and doesn't intend to - at least no evidence in 20 years. The stores are treated the same as in any other bedroom community - for convenience only, not as their go-to solution. I came from a small town that has a diverse shopping area, its own hospital and medical clinics that have existed for years and years (before I was born), movie theatres, sports fields. It could use more too but it definitely offers more than Sooke does – Sooke relies on its neighbours to supply while they keep building houses.

I live and work in Sooke and rarely want to go outside of Sooke for any of my needs. Sometimes local high prices and lack of available options do require it.

What's with making Shields Rd pedestrian only?? That would be a waste of a road. Automotive store needed. I miss Midway. The drive is definitely worth avoiding to shop local.

Sooke is amazing. I will stay here, no matter what they offer. The best!!

We are on a roll, let's keep going.

Sooke is a difficult and dangerous town to walk and shop in...the crosswalks are located in busy areas that often have buses parked blocking the views...everyone is just ridiculous....coming out of the round about, across from CIBC to the shopping area across the street, has anyone ever considered more street lights ...sooke shopping has greatly improved since I moved to the area 50 years ago and I give credit to all of the people who have opened stores and have managed to stay in business , even through Covid...I support as many businesses I can in Sooke even though I live in Shirley!

It is hard to spend money here when u live cheque to cheque. Online options/Langford cheaper. Want to support local but Sometimes feel can't afford it

Need more businesses so that more people can work and shop in Sooke

Sooke does not have enough accessible walking (for walkers, wheelchairs, disabled people)

More educational opportunities and events is all I can think of besides restaurants. Would love Sooke to be a seaside village but it seems that ship has sailed.

More entertainment activities, especially during rainy season

In order to retain the old world small town charm we need to GO up 5 km and start again, another community, stop developing it . SOOKE IS FULL This is a excellent community with support and is splitting at the seams. Not enough infrastructure! The food bank is overwhelmed and struggles...

Please keep Sooke the great place it is. We can travel to Langford for big box and chain stores. The people who live and work in this community are wonderful. I have yet to see a grumpy salesperson in this town. It is a big reason why we moved here.

More than one main road

Retired shop in Sooke as much as possible. Lucky to have a Dr locally

It's great

Roadways in the local area especially west coast road need repair. Need less hydro outage's which means working on priority basis with BC Hydro.

More entertainment businesses that are open at night, transparency into prices, activities that promote healthy lifestyle and community, connection, a better hardware store V restore, lumber, craft supplies other than yarn, it be nice for the chamber of commerce make guidance on how to start a business (food truck, bakery, local supply store) and how to open it in sooke including cost estimates. Even guidance to help businesses lower costs in their operations. I personally would love to do something but I have no idea where to even start

How about construction of a Safe Walkway between centre Sooke to Whiffin Spit Rd? I use a scooter and power wheelchair. Sooke is a very dangerous place for us folks! Also Lights and Signals at ALL Crosswalks! Too many close calls in town

More connecting sidewalks and sidewalks in general

Very little return for the amount of taxes we pay. Many places have a more equal taxation where everyone pays tax including renters Based on occupants of each home .

Need a fresh fish outlet like finest of the sea

I love the small town feel to Sooke, I love unique shops and dining that would promote more towns people to explore here than going Into Langford or Victoria in my opinion

I wish people had a better work ethic here and kept restaurants and stores open longer.

We need to attract tourism, especially during the summer months by having businesses along the waterfront.

Question 9 did not have Optometry Services as a choice but had Dental Services. Why is that?

Groceries are expensive here

The traffic to Sooke is a put off and I try to avoid it.

The cannabis industry is huge here, yet you haven't once included it in your options. There are 4 busy outlets offering both recreational cannabis products as well as therapeutic ones.

Build out of parks and trails master plan as well as bike racks nearby to businesses would make it easier to shop in Sooke.

Another local pub\gathering place would be really nice

The groceries stores are more expensive if you don't shop sales.

Just love it here 😊

We need more choice for everything. Also wish we had a movie theatre

We need a teenager friendly hangout spot

There's a lot of homes being built but no new shops, restaurants and entertainment which we have to leave town to find.

Sooke country market - road safety is poor.

Fix the traffic issues before adding any more stores

We have a real shortage of reasonably priced groceries. This sends people to Langford for Costco and Superstore and Walmart. Once we have to drive in, we might as well do our other shopping as well. Affordable groceries are key to keeping shoppers in Sooke.

Waterfront access and parking are key to bring people out. Then ease of access to business from there can generate business.

Also improved V dedicated transit within Sooke would help residents get around to make purchases

More connectivity and safe walking paths would be desirable for the existing and new communities. Note: dangerous walking along West Coast Road for local people trying to support Wild Mountain, Prestige and other businesses

The community and it's dynamic is systematically being destroyed by over population and densification. The beauty and nature surrounding it is also paying a sad price.

I'm from Newfoundland, now living here in sooke, love it. Government talk about recycle , compost , environment , list is big and long. I wish that many of the houses , with their lands would not look like Sanford and Sons..

Most towns would make these people clean up their yard and their homes... Dont get me wrong

Love Sooke. Try to buy Sooke when I can, but sometimes I have to go out of Sooke for products not available, or because price difference is just too high.

Lack of side walks, more accessibility

Traffic congestion means sometimes I go into Langford from East Sooke instead of coming to Sooke

Unfortunately, Sooke retailers over charge when you work in Langford and pay less then half the price. Also retailers deliver to keep customers happy and be able to afford

Less corporations

I would shop and dine in Sooke more if there was less congestion for driving or bus. Currently we do not dine there as we can not get therefrom East Sooke at dinner 🍷 🍷

I'd like to see a Country Grocer store

Sooke could use more education opportunities

I love spending my money in Sooke, and I want to support our town and locally owned and operated independent businesses whenever I can. Keep it up!

The ocean views are being taken up by condos. They should be more accessible in town for tourists and residents.

A retail boardwalk in town at the ocean would be great to sit and have coffee and a snack

Build more commercial instead of continuously raising property taxes.

A feed store would be awesome.

The economy would improve if residents didn't need to travel outside of town to shop.

Need to encourage more commercial tax base

There is a real opportunity for Sooke to continue to develop as a unique and special place. We can go to neighbouring communities for chain stores.

I love shopping locally in Sooke, I thought the late-night shopping in December was a great idea but may have been improved by a directed walking experience, whether it was a map or maybe a little treat station in the middle since it made more sense to walk than drive but it's also not a super short walk.

Improving/creating more bicycle lanes + proper sidewalks and pedestrian crossing (area of West Coast road/Tominny Rd)

My husband and I are elderly. We do volunteer work in the community and are very aware of how the elderly are not catered for in this community. The Local branch of the Canadian Legion and the Lions club do a tremendous amount to work towards providing some services and money towards needy sections in the community. I did notice that at no time in your survey did we get to give credit to the volunteer services of Legion members and other volunteers in the town who contribute hugely to the economy.

Walking around Sooke via sidewalks is crucial. There should be no talk of 'clean environment' until there are proper/safe bike lanes and SIDEWALKS!

Proud to be a mostly Sooke employer. 80% of our staff live in Sooke. Proud to support Sooke small businesses

Needs more activities like bowling, pool hall, stores and restaurants open later.

Groceries here are outrageously expensive, so we ship for food in Langford.

Only visited with my granddaughter’s soccer team.

Grocery stores are all too expensive Sooke. It is still worth the drive to shop in Langford for gas, groceries and household items

Improve access in and out of town, no one lane restrictions, two lane traffic all the way! More and improved medical facilities

Traffic lights are too quick. Church and Sooke rd. 30 min wait. Three cars can go through one green light.

Never loose the small-town feel; otherwise one day you will wake up in Westshore.

I believe residents are doing a pretty good job of supporting Sooke Business, especially in the current political climate. more variety would be a plus

Sooke Would benefit from larger more diverse shopping choices.

Since moving to Sooke in Aug of 2023, I have bought more online than I have spent time trying to find products I want in Sooke, mostly for the reason that I doubt that I can find them here. Or think they will be more expensive in small shops. I would love buy local more often.

Cost of goods and availability are the two highest factors in my shopping outside of Sooke.

We're just moving to sook as of March 20!

Nowhere to park anything larger than standard truck/van. (No RV, Trailer parking options - especially in town & at beaches etc)

Aesthetically the town could look “quainter”. More shops , cafes and restaurants would definitely have the people in Sooke and visitors spending more money here.

By allowing large developers to escape development costs, and then have them implant box stores.... this is a nail in the coffin of independent stores

It is time for some larger chain stores to locate in Sooke.

I can not wait for increased density in the core! More shoppers and shops and walkers keeping the core alive!

I have spent more money on auto expenses than anything else, but this business not mentioned.

This is an EXTREMELY WELL KNOWN ARTS COMMUNITY - Make the restaurants stand out - to make people want to stop here to eat and also purchase locally whilst here. Have a competition for local artists to design the décor and outside of the restaurants, to make them unique for Sooke - The Biggest Arts Community on Vancouver Island! Make Sooke really unique.

Sooke tends to be a magical community where friends and neighbours become family.

Retail space for start ups is challenging. Finding space for the container style storefronts as seen on Station in Langford should be possible.

A work in positive progress

I have stopped shopping at any US owned big box stores and am now solely shopping at independent locally owned stores. I also like to support sole proprietor businesses. Used to learn of them through FaceBook - am now off FaceBook and I find I no longer have exposure to these businesses as they don't advertise/have a website presence.

Wonderful community to live in, so many great people and environment. I believe the community would benefit from having a Walkable town centre, not just a highway through road.

I think we need to bring in at least a couple of larger chain stores for jobs and tax base. Many independent stores are just too expensive to shop at and it's worthwhile to go into Langford to save money.

AS WELL AS SHOPPING THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE TO ENTERTAIN CHILDREN, TEENS AND ADULTS. MOST HAVE TO TRAVEL INTO LANGFORD OR FURTHER FOR ENTERTAINMENT NEEDS AND THAT'S NOT AN OPTION FOR A LOT OF FAMILIES.

I Love Sooke

Allowing cafes to have sidewalk patios in warmer seasons, especially with water views, giving a sense of community

I feel sad for local retail outlets and don't know how they survive. I wonder if any REAL research is available on business viability for new brick and mortar stores. Or any consolidated marketing for Sooke businesses, online and offline. I think this would massively benefit business and would-be business owners.

Development of a better traffic plan so that not ALL traffic has to go thru the middle of town. esp for trucks (development, construction, logging related) make the feeling downtown too jostling for such a small town and less safe for walking, traffic. noisy and dangerous..

I go outside of sooke to shop big box so I can get more for my money. I shop at Costco to get family sized items that I use a lot of. We don't have those options here. I also shop Michaels for crafts. Walmart for general cheap groceries. Price is a real issue for me.

Grocery stores must find ways to lower prices. Often 50% LESS at big chain markets. Seniors and those on fixed incomes will shop outside Sooke for staples.

The biggest barrier to shopping in Sooke is that there are so many places the lack GOOD wheeled access. Just try to find an easy path through the Evergreen Mall, or any of Sooke's beautiful parks, or along so many roads (Otter Point from Sooke Road north to City Hall is a disgrace).

Keep it small. Too much development already.

Strongly support local, independent businesses.

I live in east sooke, I travel extremely less now to sooke because of the traffic

I support Sooke any time that the products are available and the price is reasonable. (I am willing to pay a little more to shop in Sooke)

Shopping in Sooke is my preference, however, saving money is becoming more top of mind as US Tariffs are on the horizon

We need a secondary route into Sooke. We often make purchases in Victoria before our commute home to save time and avoid the crawling traffic. We are a large family and save literally \$300+ a month buying from superstore instead of local grocery stores. We'd love to support them more but the cost is prohibitive.

We have way too many houses for our infrastructure and, especially new residents, want to ruin Sooke by bringing in more housing, big stores, big businesses.

We were a small, somewhat isolated small towns which always have a different economy from the big towns and cities but you accept that if you move there. Now so many want to turn Sooke into Langford to make it more convenient and less expensive. I, and all my family and friends, are quite willing, even if it's a hardship, to have a more expensive economy in order to keep us a small, pleasant town. If you want Langford then move there!

I live in Shirley & do much of my shopping in Sooke so ease of parking is important.

Sooke is Wonderful!

Longer hours of operation and stay open on weekends

The biggest problem is traffic, I would spend more time and money if it were easier to get into Sooke from East Sooke where I live.

